

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A multiple-printer control apparatus for controlling a plurality of printers, comprising:

a print-processing capability detection unit for detecting print processing capability of each of the plurality of printers;

an overall-workload detection unit for detecting overall workload including the quantity of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers that are capable of printing as determined by the print processing capability detection unit; and

a printer control unit for performing control, on the basis of print processing capabilities detected by said print-processing capability detection unit and the overall workload detected by said overall-workload detection unit, in such a manner that print data, which represents at least one of images and characters to be printed, is applied to each of the plurality of printers that are capable of printing as determined by the print processing capability detection unit, and each printer of the plurality of printers prints at least one of images and characters the number of sheets whereof conforms to a number of prints.

2. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said printer control unit controls the plurality of printers in such a

manner that the print processing executed by the plurality of printers ends approximately simultaneously.

3. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said print-processing capability detection unit includes:

a print-processing capability data storage unit for storing, in advance, data representing the print processing capability of each printer; and

a unit for reading out data representing print processing capability that has been stored in said print-processing capability data storage unit.

4. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said print-processing capability detection unit has a determination unit for determining whether data representing print processing capability of a connected printer has been stored in said print-processing capability data storage unit; and

in response to a determination by said determination unit that data representing print processing capability of a connected printer has not been stored in said print-processing capability data storage unit, predetermined print data is applied to the printer for which it has been determined that the data representing print processing capability has not been stored, and this printer

is caused to print the predetermined print data, whereby the print processing capability of this printer is detected.

5. (Currently Amended) A multiple-printer control method for controlling a plurality of printers, ~~comprising the steps of:~~

detecting processing capability of each of the plurality of printers;

detecting overall workload including the quantity of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers that are capable of printing as determined by detecting the processing capabilities; and

performing control on the basis of the detected print processing capabilities and overall workload in such a manner that print data, which represents at least one of the images and characters to be printed, is applied to each of the plurality of printers that are capable of printing as determined by detecting the processing capabilities, and each printer of the plurality of printers prints at least one of images and characters the number of sheets whereof conforms to a number of prints.

6. (Previously Presented) The multiple-printer control apparatus of claim 1, wherein the overall workload detection unit detects the overall workload by summing job quantities and allocating at least one of images and characters based on the summed job quantities.

7. (Previously Presented) The multiple-printer control method of claim 5, wherein the overall workload is detected by summing job quantities and allocating at least one of images and characters based on the summed job quantities.

8. (Currently Amended) A multiple-printer control apparatus for controlling a plurality of printers comprising:

a print-processing capability determining unit for determining print processing capability of each of the plurality of printers;

an overall-workload determining unit for determining overall workload including the quantity of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers; and

a printer control unit for allocating, based on the determined print-processing capabilities of each of the plurality of printers and on the determined overall workload, the printing to be performed at each of the plurality of printers.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the printer control unit allocates the printing to be performed ~~where~~ wherein print processing executed by the plurality of printers ends approximately simultaneously.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the print-processing capability determination unit determines print processing capabilities by applying predetermined print data to one of the plurality of printers.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the printing to be performed includes a plurality of images to be printed where the plurality of images is greater than the number of printers.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the printing to be performed includes a plurality of images to be printed where the plurality of images is greater than the number of printers.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the number of images to be printed is greater than the number of printers.